United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/906
7 June 1991

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Security Council holds consultations to discuss Secretary-General's report on guidelines for arms embargo against Iraq.

- Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees steps up food distribution to meet "desperate" needs of millions of people in Horn of Africa.

- Secretary-General, on official visit to Guinea, meets with President of country.

- United Nations Development Programme allocates $1.1 million for reconstruction and rehabilitation of Bangladesh.

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The Security Council was holding consultations this afternoon to discuss the report of Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuélla on the guidelines for an arms embargo against Iraq. The Secretary-General was asked by the Council, in its cease-fire resolution of 3 April, to provide it with such information.

Talking to correspondents about the Council's deliberations, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, Sir David Hannay, said that in the view of his delegation, the guidelines recommended by the Secretary-General were "excellent". However, he said, a resolution was needed for the guidelines to obtain legal effect.

In reply to a question about the possibility of removing the current sanctions against Iraq, Sir David said there was no support in the Council for changing the sanctions. When asked about the withdrawal of allied forces from northern Iraq, the British Ambassador said the matter was still being discussed, but no dates had been set.

In a separate development, the United Nations Disaster Relief Organization (UNDRO) reported yesterday that the repatriation of Kurdish refugees in northern Iraq was continuing apace on all fronts.

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For information media—not an official record

In a report issued at headquarters, the agency said that large informal groups were reluctant to return to their homes or were unable to leave from both the area along the Turkey-Iraq border and the marshes astride the Iranian border.

The agency said that uncertainty was still felt and watchfulness maintained, particularly with regard to the need for adequate food for those still in transit and those settling back home. According to the World Food Programme (WFP) only some 10 per cent of the requirement of $64 million had been met and additional orders could not be placed without further contributions to cover the gap.

The UNDRO reported further that the current situation coupled with any hold-up in the deployment of United Nations security guards might trigger major reverse movements. Of the nearly $35 million that was requested from the international community to pay for the guards, so far only $4.5 million had been pledged, the agency said.

In reply to questions by correspondents, a United Nations spokesman said earlier today that it was hoped that the Governments that had clamoured for the presence of the United Nations security guards in northern Iraq would be forthcoming with the funds. Out of some 500 expected security guards in the area, there were currently 50 in place, he said.

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is reinforcing its presence in the Horn of Africa, where an on-going lack of security has prevented any major food distribution to millions of people for the past 15 days.

According to an agency representative in Addis Ababa, the needs in the camps were "desperate". He added that UNHCR officials had been effectively cut off from the camps for the past two weeks.

The UNHCR reported that nearly 250,000 refugees had fled Ethiopia into Sudan, Djibouti and Kenya -- countries whose hospitality and resources were already overstretched by prior refugee influxes.

The UNHCR and other United Nations agencies were airlifting tens of thousands of tents, plastic sheeting, high-nutrition biscuits and other food items to Ethiopia's neighbours to help cope with the new refugee flows, a communiqué from the agency stated today, and additional staff were being sent to Djibouti.

The agency said further that international field workers in southern Sudan had reported an influx of between 80,000 and 100,000 refugees from the western Gambela district of Ethiopia. That group, it said, included nearly the entire population of Sudanese refugees from the UNHCR camp at Itang near Gambela, as well as Ethiopians from two other tribes.

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According to the communiqué, UNHCR officials in Addis Ababa had expressed concern about the safety of refugees fleeing into southern war-torn Sudan to escape violence in western Ethiopia and had appealed to authorities in Ethiopia to provide security to refugees in the two remaining camps.

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The Secretary-General, currently in Guinea on an official visit, today met with the President of that country, Lansana Conte. They discussed political changes in Guinea, in particular the democratization process leading up to legislative elections in 1992. The President briefed Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar on the economic situation in Guinea, and they spoke about regional conflicts in Africa and the resulting refugee problem in Guinea, with special attention to the role of UNHCR.

During a meeting with the Minister for Planning and Cooperation and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guinea, the Secretary-General received a detailed briefing on the economic situation in the country. Among other topics covered in the meeting were the situation in Liberia, the refugee problem in Guinea and the internal reform being carried out in the country.

Speaking to the press in Conakry yesterday, the Secretary-General, in reply to a question regarding South Africa, said that he would soon be submitting a report to the General Assembly on the situation in that country. He said he had already met in Abuja with Nelson Mandela of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) as well as with representatives of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC). The Secretary-General said he intended to complete the contacts and, "if necessary, send a mission for an up-to-date assessment of the situation".

To a question regarding the Middle East, the Secretary-General said he was following with interest the peace initiatives undertaken by the United States. However, he said, any solution to the problem should include the participation of the United Nations.

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The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has approved $1.1 million to help the Government of Bangladesh identify and meet the country's post-emergency reconstruction and rehabilitation needs and improve its ability to cope with future natural disasters.

That action is in direct response to the April cyclone which had left an estimated 135,000 Bangladeshis dead and thousands more homeless. The cyclone had also destroyed water wells, hospitals and other buildings, roads and bridges, as well as crops and livestock. The Government is seeking $1.3 billion for emergency relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation.

According to UNDP, the funds will be used to set up a Disaster Management and Coordinating Unit in the Ministry of Relief, which serves as the focal point for monitoring and coordinating disaster relief, and to prepare a programme which includes coastal protection and warning systems.

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United Nations

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Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/907
10 June 1991

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General ends two-day official visit to Guinea-Bissau during which he meets President; to chair United Nations inter-agency meeting in Geneva.

- Iraq protests against proposed 30 per cent to be deducted from its oil earnings to pay for damages caused by its invasion and occupation of Kuwait.

- United Nations inter-agency team set up to assess humanitarian needs, to go to Ethiopia and neighbouring countries.

- General Assembly agrees to take up financing of observer mission in El Salvador.

- Speakers at thirty-eight session of United Nations Development Programme Governing Council see "ideological content" in Human Freedom Index of 1991 Human Development report.

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Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar now on the last week of his three-week tour to Europe and Africa, has left Guinea-Bissau on his way to Geneva, where he will preside over a United Nations inter-agency meeting.

This morning the Secretary-General met again with the President of Guinea-Bissau, who briefed him on political reforms under way in the country, economic development and United Nations economic assistance.

Guinea-Bissau was the third West African nation on Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar's tour, following Guinea and Sierra Leone.

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Iraq has protested against the Secretary-General's proposal to deduct 30 per cent from its oil earnings to pay for damages caused by its invasion and occupation of Kuwait during the Gulf war.

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For information media—not an official record

In accordance with Security Council resolution 687 (1991) of 3 April, setting the terms for the cease-fire, the Secretary-General has recommended to the Council that 30 per cent of Iraq's earnings stemming from its oil exports be transferred to a compensation fund to pay countries and nationals for losses during the conflict.

In a letter of 7 June to the Secretary-General, Iraq's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Abdul Amir Al-Anbari, said his country had, given the established facts of its economic situation, requested a grace period of five years. In spite of this, he said, the Secretary-General had used economic data and figures supposed to be attained in 1993 in order to assess what was due in 1991 and 1992.

The Iraqi Ambassador went on to say that the international community's economic embargo against Iraq remained comprehensive and severe. His country had reservations as to the Secretary-General's estimates for Iraq's annual requirements for civilian imports. Those requirements were estimated on the basis of data for 1989 -- a year of severe austerity due to the circumstances of the eight-year Iran-Iraq war. Iraq's normal civilian requirements were far in excess of that figure, he said.

In the light of all the facts, Iraq wished to reiterate its request for a five-year grace period, during which no sum should be deducted from its oil export earnings, the Ambassador said, adding that Iraq needed to address the major problems strangling its economy and threatening the Iraqi people with hunger and disease.

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A United Nations inter-agency team set up to assess immediate requirements for humanitarian assistance to Ethiopia and neighbouring countries, is scheduled to depart for the region tomorrow, a United Nations spokesman said today. Headed by the Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP), James C. Ingram, the team is expected to stay in Ethiopia for one week.

The spokesman said representatives of a number of donor countries had met this morning with Virendra Dayal, Chef de Cabinet, to discuss "the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Horn of Africa". The meeting was requested by the five Nordic countries -- Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

In a related development, the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO) today issued an appeal for medicines for southern Ethiopia, on behalf of the World Health Organization (WHO).

The agency said there was currently only one functioning civilian hospital in Addis Ababa, run by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Other major hospitals had completely depleted their stocks of fluids,

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antibiotics, analgesics and wound dressings.

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The General Assembly this morning agreed to take up the question of financing the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL). The Assembly, having resumed its forty-fifth session, also decided to allocate the issue to its Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary).

In an addendum to his report to the Assembly of 30 May, the Secretary-General recommended the appropriation of more than $30 million for 12 months of the force's operation, which would focus on the monitoring, investigation and promotion of human rights issues in El Salvador.

The Secretary-General had previously advised that the approval of his proposal for an early establishment of ONUSAL should not be linked to the success of the remaining negotiations agreed between the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN).

He said that once there was agreement on the cease-fire, it was envisaged that the United Nations would be called upon to play a broader role towards the achievement of peace in the region. It was his intention, therefore, said the Secretary-General, to submit to the Assembly, at an appropriate time, a revised structure of ONUSAL, subject to Security Council approval.

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The publication of the Human Development Report 1991 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was praised by most speakers this morning, as the UNDP Governing Council began its discussion of the report of the Administrator for 1990 and of programme-level activities. Some speakers, however, said the inclusion of a Human Freedom Index in the Report introduced ideological content into UNDP operational activities.

Speakers also stressed the need for UNDP to concentrate its resources on country-level programmes and to keep its administrative budget to a minimum. The representatives of several donor countries said that development assistance budgets would most likely not increase in the next few years, and UNDP should concentrate on the effectiveness and efficiency of its field programmes.

This year's Report included for the first time a Human Freedom Index, which listed Sweden and Denmark as "most free" countries, enjoying 38 out of 40 "freedoms". Iraq ranked last on the list, enjoying none of the freedoms of the Index.

In his foreword to the Report, UNDP Administrator William H. Draper III said no measure of human development could ever be complete without the inclusion of a measurement of freedom.

The 40 key indicators of freedom assembled in the Index included multiparty elections, press freedoms, rule of law, right to travel and assembly, opportunities for gender and ethnic equality.

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United Nations

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DH/908
11 June 1991

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Special Rapporteur on human rights under Iraqi occupation to visit Kuwait.

- Iraq rejects liability for cost of destroying its chemical weapons arsenal.

- Kuwait asks United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to help prevent possible illegal sale of art pilfered during Gulf war.

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The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Kuwait under Iraqi occupation, Walter Kalin, is scheduled to begin a nine-day visit to Kuwait tomorrow at the invitation of the Kuwaiti Government. During his visit, he will collect information and evidence on human rights violations reported to have been committed in Kuwait by the invading and occupying forces of Iraq.

The Special Rapporteur was appointed in March by the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights which had strongly condemned the Iraqi authorities and occupying forces for grave violations against Kuwaitis and nationals of other States, particularly the acts of torture, arbitrary arrests, summary executions and disappearances.

The Commission had requested the Special Rapporteur to prepare a preliminary report prior to submitting a final report to the General Assembly at its next regular session and to the Commission in 1992.

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Iraq has rejected liability for the cost of destroying its chemical weapons arsenal as requested by Security Council resolution 687 (1991).

In a letter to the Secretary-General of 9 June, Iraqi Chargé d'affaires Samir Al-Nima said his Government was willing to cooperate with the United

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Nations in the destruction of its chemical weapons but was not willing to pay for the process if done by someone else.

The official said Iraq itself had the necessary expertise and technical facilities to destroy or render harmless the weapons and was ready to discuss the subject in accordance with internationally accepted procedures. Iraq's participation in the destruction process would reduce costs and save time, the letter stated.

* * *

Kuwait has asked the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to help prevent the possible illegal sale of tens of thousands of pieces of art pilfered during the Gulf war.

The UNESCO stated in a press release that terracotta figurines, pottery, bronzes, ceramics, seals and jewels had been taken from the Kuwait National Museum. Witnesses had seen the museum being cleared out by Iraqis on 27 September, according to the Kuwaiti delegation to UNESCO.

However, the Iraqi Permanent Delegate to UNESCO, Aziz A.A. Haidar, in a letter to the organization's Director-General, Frederico Mayor, said the Kuwaiti museum pieces were being "preserved in the Iraqi National Museum pending their transfer to Kuwait by mutual agreement between the two parties and under the supervision of the United Nations Secretariat".

Kuwait has asked UNESCO, under the terms of the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, to assist it in recovering the artworks.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

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DH/909
12 June 1991

WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General chairs pledging conference in Geneva for United Nations humanitarian operation which needs a further $340 million for its programmes in Gulf region.

- Iran warns of developments in southern Iraq which it says can "seriously threaten national security of Iran and further destabilize entire region".

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Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar today in Geneva chaired a pledging conference for the United Nations humanitarian operation in the Persian Gulf, which is in deficit of some $340 million for its programmes.

A United Nations press officer reporting from Geneva said the Secretary-General urged the international community to help the Organization meet the exceptional challenge of providing humanitarian needs of helping to restore calm in Iraq, Kuwait and along Iraq's borders with Iran and Turkey. The Secretary-General told donors and international agencies, Iraq must be able to rebuild on a stable basis. Unless that happened, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar warned, the international community would be responsible for the fate of 18 million people -- a responsibility that it could not assume in the long term. He acknowledged sanctions imposed by the Security Council, but stressed that it was important to reconcile them with humanitarian assistance indispensable to the Iraqi people, particularly the most vulnerable groups. It was imperative, he continued, for States to give the United Nations the support needed to implement its humanitarian programme. Noting the tendency to focus on the plight of the Kurds, he recalled that the Shi'ites in southern Iraq were also vulnerable.

The report from Geneva said that Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar pointed out that of the deficit of $340 million for the operation, $35 million was needed to deploy United Nations guards in Iraq -- an important element in providing security in the region.

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Also addressing the pledging conference, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Sadako Ogata, said the number of Iraqi refugees opting for repatriation had dropped because of renewed fears for their future safety. Some 1 million refugees had returned to Iraq from Turkey and Iran, but 500,000 of them remained displaced because they were afraid to return to their homes, she said. More than 600,000 Iraqi refugees remained in Iran and over 13,000 inside Turkey.

Tomorrow, the Secretary-General will preside over an inter-agency meeting on humanitarian efforts in Iraq and Ethiopia, his spokesman said today. He will also chair a pledging conference on Western Sahara prior to leaving for Bern to attend celebrations marking the 700th anniversary of the Swiss Confederation.

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Meanwhile, Iran has informed the United Nations of developments in southern Iraq which it said "could seriously threaten the national security of Iran and further destabilize the entire region".

In a letter to the Secretary-General of 11 June, Iranian Ambassador Kamal Kharrazi said there was credible evidence that the Iraqi army was preparing for what he called "a general mopping-up operation" in the southern part of the country where some 700,000 Shi'ites are located. He said thousands of Iraqi citizens faced death while several hundred thousand might flee into Iran.

The Ambassador warned the international community that Iran was in no position to care for more Iraqi refugees. He called on the Secretary-General and the Security Council to "adopt immediate measures to avert the risk of recurrence of another tragic incident for the Iraqi population and the region as a whole".

Talking to the press today in Geneva before the pledging conference, the Secretary-General, asked about the situation of the Shi'ites in southern Iraq, said he was concerned with the reports he had heard. He said he had met yesterday with his Executive Delegate, Sadruddin Aga Khan, and that the United Nations was in constant touch with its representatives in Baghdad to follow any new developments.

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United Nations

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Prepared by Central News

DH/910
13 June 1991

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Inter-agency meeting in Geneva on United Nations humanitarian operation in Iraq, Kuwait, and Iraqi border areas agrees to dispatch high-level mission to area.

- Secretary-General announces pledges of $85 million to United Nations humanitarian efforts in Iraq, Kuwait, and Iraqi border areas; $8 million to deploy United Nations security guards in Iraq.

* * *

Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar today in Geneva presided over a United Nations inter-agency meeting on the Organization's humanitarian operation in Iraq and Kuwait. Participating in the meeting, which was convened to review the critical situation in the Gulf region, were his Executive Delegate, Sadruddin Aga Khan, and the executive heads of United Nations specialized agencies and programmes responsible for the humanitarian efforts in the area.

Participants in the inter-agency meeting noted with satisfaction the pledges received at yesterday's pledging conference, but recalled that more than half the amount needed for the humanitarian operations remained outstanding.

They welcomed the operation's achievements to date and analysed the key problems remaining. They agreed that monitoring should be strengthened on the ground, particularly regarding food, nutrition and health needs. They also reiterated the need for security for the staff involved.

In the light of deteriorating conditions for civilians in the area, the meeting decided that a high-level mission should be undertaken to conduct an updated and more precise assessment of the current humanitarian needs and to recommend remedial measures.

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For information media—not an official record

The meeting also reviewed the critical situation in Africa and recalled the dispatch of a high-level mission to be led by the Executive Director of the World Food Programme to evaluate emergency needs and prepare a report on the situation for the Secretary-General.

* * *

The Secretary-General in a statement yesterday at the pledging conference for United Nations humanitarian assistance to Kuwait, Iraq and Iraqi border areas presented preliminary estimates of the contributions made by States. He said pledges amounted to some $85 million, and 150 security guards had been made available by three countries. He added that more support was needed to reach the $450 million budget, of which only $280 for humanitarian relief had so far been pledged. Of the $35 million budget for guards, $8 million was pledged at the conference.

The Secretary-General went on to say that the deployment of the United Nations Guard Contingent was "perhaps not the ideal solution", but that it seemed to be the best way of responding to an urgent need which could not be ignored. The guards would constitute an important element in the overall plan for dealing with the problem of the security of operations, he said, adding that the plan could contribute to restoring calm in the region.

The Secretary-General stressed that the humanitarian efforts did not only concern the Kurds but also the Shi'ites in southern Iraq. Public attention, he said, was focusing above all on the plight of the Kurds, while the needs of the Shi'ites tended to be neglected.

After the meeting yesterday, the Secretary-General attended a working luncheon hosted by his Executive Delegate, Sadruddin Aga Khan, and with the participation of the heads of the United Nations humanitarian agencies at which the urgent situation in Africa was discussed, in particular the developments in Ethiopia.

The Secretary-General also presided over a pledging conference on Western Sahara after which he left Geneva for Bern where he will take part tomorrow in ceremonies marking the 700th anniversary of the Swiss Confederation.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

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DH/911
14 June 1991

F R I D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

◆ Security Council decides unanimously to extend mandate of United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) for another six months, until 15 December; in second decision asks Secretary-General to undertake consultations on new method of financing of Force.

◆ German Foreign Minister calls for establishment of United Nations humanitarian centres in southern Iraq to assist Shi'ite population.

◆ Secretary-General calls for international support for repatriation programme without which, he says, "fair and impartial referendum could not take place" in Western Sahara.

◆ "Day of the African Child", organized by the United Nations Children's Fund to raise awareness about the situation of children in Africa, is celebrated at United Nations.

* * *

The Security Council this morning unanimously decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) for a further period of six months, until 15 December.

By a second unanimous decision, the Council noted with concern the "chronic financing problem" of UNFICYP to which Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar had drawn attention in his report. Members of the Council concluded that a new method of financing of the Force was needed which would put it on a sound and secure financial basis. They decided that the question of the cost of UNFICYP should be studied further with the aim of reducing and clearly defining the costs for which the Organization should be responsible.

By its decision, the Council also asked the Secretary-General to hold consultations with Council members, troop-contributing countries and others concerned, so that a decision on the question of cost could be taken by the time of the next extension of UNFICYP's mandate in December.

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The Force was established in 1964 to prevent the recurrence of fighting between the two communities -- the Greek and the Turkish Cypriots -- on the island.

* * *

Germany is encouraging the United Nations to establish humanitarian centres in southern Iraq to assist the Shi'ite population.

In a letter to the Secretary-General, dated 13 June, German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher said his Government was dismayed by reports of brutal acts of repression against the Shi'ites. Such flagrant violations of human rights, he said, held the danger of yet another mass exodus of Iraqi civilians in the near future. Germany had supported United Nations programmes for Iraqi refugees, he said, and was ready to provide further support if necessary.

In a separate development, Kuwait informed the Security Council that Iraq has yet to release around 3,800 prisoners of war and detainees.

In a letter of 13 June, Kuwaiti Chargé d'affaires Mohammad Al Sallal said Iraq had only returned a single aircraft out of all the property it had seized and that it continued to make hostile statements.

The Kuwaiti official described the lack of action as proof that Iraq had not implemented its acceptance of Security Council resolutions.

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The Secretary-General said yesterday in Geneva that without the repatriation programme for Western Sahara to be carried out by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "a fair and impartial referendum could not take place".

Opening the pledging conference for the repatriation programme, he said that was why he had recommended that the United Nations Mission for the referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) should not be deployed on schedule unless it had been unequivocally established by that date that the necessary voluntary contributions were available in full and in time for the repatriation programme. The Mission had been scheduled for deployment no later than 16 weeks after the General Assembly approved its budget on 17 May.

The Secretary-General expressed encouragement by the discussions which he had just had in Africa with the leaders of Algeria, Morocco and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Sanguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro (POLISARIO). He said he was in a position to state unreservedly that the discussions had reinforced his optimism with respect to the positive role which the United Nations could play in solving the question of Western Sahara.

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The United Nations was celebrating today the "Day of the African Child" with activities of song, dance, poetry in the General Assembly Hall aimed at raising awareness about the situation of children in Africa.

Organized by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), today's activities take place two days prior to the official "Day of the African Child", declared last year by the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The OAU declaration committed African leaders to the survival, protection and development of the region's single most important resource -- children.

The UNICEF Executive Director, James P. Grant, told participants that the Day would serve as a reminder of the promises embodied in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the Declaration of the 1990 World Summit for Children.

He said that rapid population growth and scarce resources prolonged economic crisis aggravated by foreign debt, deep cuts in social spending and the scourge of the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), in addition to drought and armed conflict in some areas, have left Africa's children prey to disease, ignorance and poverty.

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United Nations

Press Release

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DH/912
17 June 1991

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Security Council approves guidelines for enforcing arms embargo against Iraq. Decides that Iraq should bear cost of destroying proscribed weapons.

- Secretary-General reports that United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission is fully established and carrying out tasks in accordance with Security Council.

- Special Committee against Apartheid holds solemn meeting in observance of International Day of Solidarity with Struggling People of South Africa (Soweto Day).

- New round of talks opens in Cuernavaca between representatives of Government of Guatemala and Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca .

- Office of United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator reports 35 people killed by volcanic eruptions in the Philippines.

* * *

The Security Council this afternoon decided that the full cost of the destruction of proscribed weapons within Iraq, as outlined in its resolution 687 (1991), should be borne by the Government of Iraq. It took that action by unanimously adopting resolution 699 (1991), in which it also requested that the Secretary-General submit, within 30 days, recommendations on the most effective means by which Iraq might meet those obligations.

The Council also decided to encourage the maximum assistance, in cash and in kind, from all Member States, to ensure that the destruction of those weapons was undertaken effectively and expeditiously.

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Also this afternoon, the Council approved a set of guidelines to facilitate full international implementation of the arms embargo provisions of its resolution 687 (1991). It took that action by unanimously adopting resolution 700 (1991).

The items proscribed include all forms of conventional weapons and military equipment; all chemical and biological weapons; all ballistic missiles with a range greater than 150 kilometres; and nuclear weapons or nuclear-weapons-usable material. Also proscribed are research, development, support and manufacturing facilities for those items; repair and production facilities for ballistic missiles concerned; technology under licensing used in the production, utilization or stockpiling of proscribed items; and personnel or materials for training or technical support services.

* * *

The United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM), set up to oversee the demilitarized zone between the two countries, is now established and fully able to carry out the tasks assigned to it by the Security Council, according to Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar.

In a report to the Council, the Secretary-General said that since UNIKOM was established on 9 May, there had been instances in which personnel of the armed forces of both Iraq and Kuwait were observed in the demilitarized zone. These observations had been brought to the attention of the parties concerned, which had explained that the majority were due to errors of navigation or misunderstandings over the boundaries of the zone.

A further review of the strength of the force will be undertaken in October and recommendations made to the Security Council about its future in the area.

* * *

The Special Committee against Apartheid held a solemn meeting today in observance of Soweto Day, known officially as the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggling People of South Africa.

The day marks an incident 15 years ago, when hundreds of black schoolchildren were killed or wounded by the South African police during a peaceful demonstration against an inferior system of education.

Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, in a message read out by Sotirios Mousouris, Assistant Secretary-General of the Centre against Apartheid, said this year's observance was occurring at a time of

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unprecedented change in South Africa. Since last year's observance, dramatic developments, both positive and negative, had taken place, ensuring that the issue of apartheid remained a subject of intense world attention.

The Secretary-General went on to say that it was unfortunate that the commemoration this year of Soweto Day should take place against a backdrop of increasing violence in many parts of South Africa. He called for immediate remedial action by all parties concerned in order to avoid the very serious consequences, not only for the negotiation process but for the future viability of the country as a whole, that might result from the violence being left unchecked.

Also addressing the meeting, the Chairman of the Special Committee, Ibrahim A. Gambari (Nigeria), said the political process now appeared to be at risk due to unfulfilled promises and escalating violence. It would be a tragedy, he said, if the fragile process which had been launched were detailed. A premature lifting of all international pressure would be counterproductive, "if not downright dangerous", the Chairman stated. While South Africa's positive steps should be encouraged, they did not yet justify the lifting of international pressure, which assisted, rather than impeded, the process of negotiations, he said.

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A United Nations official announced today that a new round of talks opened this morning in Cuernavaca, Mexico between the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG). The talks will deal with the first items of the general agenda agreed upon in Mexico on 26 April, namely, democratization and human rights. The official said that under the procedures agreed on between the Government and URNG, the talks were being held in the presence of the Conciliator, Monsignor Rodolfo Quezada Toruño, and the Secretary-General's representative, Francesc Vendrell, acting as observer. The talks were scheduled to continue throughout the week.

* * *

The Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO) reported today that 35 were killed last week when intense volcanic eruptions hit the Philippines.

The agency said in a press communique that there had been widespread damage and that the airport had been closed due to poor visibility. Roads surrounding the volcano were knee-deep in ash, UNDRO said, and several bridges had been destroyed. Local scientists reported that about 1 million people were in danger. The United States Clark Air Force Base had been evacuated and some 80,000 people were sheltered in emergency centres and under tents, UNDRO said.

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United Nations

Press Release

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DH/913
18 June 1991

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to resume negotiations in Pretoria on return of South African exiles.

- UNHCR officials call for urgent international assistance to save thousands of lives in Ethiopia and to help hundreds of thousands of Ethiopian, Somali and Sudanese refugees.

- Inspection team to visit Iraq to continue survey of nuclear materials and facilities.

- Speakers in Economic and Social Council's Social Committee focus on substitutions for drug crops; other anti-drug programmes.

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A United Nations press officer in Geneva reported today that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) would resume negotiations this week in Pretoria on the return of South African exiles.

The Director of the UNHCR's Regional Bureau for Africa, Nicholas Bwakira, who will be leading a delegation from UNHCR, told the press officer that the purpose of the mission would be to negotiate the general amnesty for South African refugees who wished to repatriate voluntarily to return to South Africa.

Mr. Bwakira said the Agency had already obtained from the South African Government the agreement that UNHCR will be able to establish a presence in South Africa. However, he said, the Agency needed to make sure the refugees would be returning under conditions of safety and dignity for the purpose of which an amnesty law -- an amnesty promulgation -- was required. Under such a law the South African Government would guarantee that no one who comes under UNHCR auspices will be prosecuted for crimes committed before going into exile or while in exile, he said.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

The estimated cost is about $40 million for the repatriation of the 40,000 refugees and exiles.

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United Nations officials say more international assistance is urgently needed to save thousands of lives in Ethiopia and to help hundreds of thousands of Ethiopian, Somali and Sudanese refugees who fled the recent conflict in Ethiopia.

Just back from a United Nations assessment mission to the region, UNHCR Regional Director for Africa, Nicholas Bwakira, told a press officer in Geneva that the serious refugee situation in the Horn of Africa had become "dramatic" in the wake of recent political developments in Ethiopia.

An estimated 300,000 soldiers of the former Ethiopian regime had been displaced within Ethiopia or had fled to Sudan, Djibouti and Kenya, Mr Mr. Bwakira was reported to say. In addition, thousands of Somali and Sudanese refugees who had sought asylum in Ethiopia had fled the Ethiopian conflict and were returning to their countries, he said.

The Geneva-based press officer said the United Nations inter-agency mission, which was headed by World Food Programme Director James Ingram, would be launching an updated appeal shortly.

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A team of experts from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), supported and assisted by experts provided by the Special Commission established by Security Council resolution 687 (1991), is on its way to Iraq to continue the inspection of that country's nuclear capabilities that was begun in May.

The mission will be visiting sites in and near the Tuwaitha research site, 30 kilometres from Baghdad, as well as other sites newly designated by the Special Commission on the basis of information that has recently become available. The team, which includes specialists in various nuclear-related disciplines, will be continuing the survey begun by the first mission of nuclear materials and facilities in Iraq as required by the Security Council resolution.

The outcome of the visit will be reflected in a report which the Director-General of IAEA will make to the Security Council, through the Secretary-General. Neither the Agency nor the team will be making any public statement until the visit is completed.

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The need for crop substitution as a means of combating drug production was highlighted by several speakers this morning as the Social Committee of the Economic and Social Council continued its exchange of views on drug-related issues.

The representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said that such programmes should be part of an integrated rural development approach that would consider crop substitution in a broader social and economic context.

Speakers this morning expressed support for the work of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and for the newly created United Nations International Drug Control Programme, as well as for the restructuring of United Nations drug units, the proposed expansion of the Commission's membership from 40 to 50, and the need for equal attention to be directed towards demand as well as supply of drugs.

Among those addressing the Committee yesterday, the Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, Giorgio Giacomelli, said the recent session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs saw a positive approach to the future that was moving, within the forum of the United Nations system, into a new era of international drug abuse control.

During last year, he said, the Fund for Drug Abuse Control had provided assistance to 67 individual countries through over 100 country-specific drug control programmes. Most of the new programmes that had been added this year, he said, were in Africa and the Caribbean, while the Fund's major assistance continued to be concentrated in Latin America and in South-East and South-West Asia.

Also making a statement yesterday, the President of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), Oskar Schroeder, said a number of positive developments had emerged last year, including the decrease in the abuse of some drugs in several countries. Also, he said, concerted action to combat money-laundering and to control precursors and chemicals essential for illicit drug manufacture had been energized in the wake of the entry into force of the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances last November.

Despite the positive elements, he went on to say, the situation worldwide regarding illicit production, trafficking and abuse remained grave, generating a high level of violence and environmental devastation, among other things. Even more lethal was the spread of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection among intravenous drug users and the increasing number of children born to abuser mothers.

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United Nations

Press Release

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Executive Director of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) calls for urgent effective action to counter global warming.

- Iraq-Kuwait Border Demarcation Commission completes on-site visit, having inspected entire border area.

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Increasing scientific evidence of global warming underlined the need for urgent effective action to counter it, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Mostafa K. Tolba, said today in a message sent to the second session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change, which began work in Geneva today on an international treaty to reduce the warming-up of the earth's climate.

Mr. Tolba said the mounting body of evidence on global warming and climate change showed the ever more pressing need for an effective convention with commitments and clout. There was increasing scientific evidence of global warming, he said, and an urgent need for action.

Measures to reduce the emission of carbon dioxide and other gases that contribute to global warming, a reduction in the use of fossil fuels, the development and wide-scale use of energy-efficient technologies, as well as reforestation programmes are among proposals under consideration.

The negotiators are aiming at completing the framework for a convention in time for signature at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992.

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The Iraq-Kuwait Boundary Demarcation Commission has completed an on-site visit in the area in accordance with Security Council resolution 687 (1991) setting the conditions for a cease-fire.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

The independent experts of the Commission, appointed by the Secretary-General, held fruitful discussions with the Kuwaiti representative and Kuwaiti experts in Kuwait City, as well as with the Iraqi representative and Iraqi experts in Baghdad.

Yesterday, the entire Commission, accompanied by experts from Iraq and Kuwait, inspected the entire length of the border area. The flight over the border area was facilitated by officers and helicopters of the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM). Commission members will review the findings of the on-site visit and commence substantive discussions on 2 July at United Nations headquarters at Geneva.

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